

Coons	Hoeven	Portman
Corker	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Cornyn	Inhofe	Roberts
Cotton	Isakson	Rounds
Crapo	Johnson	Rubio
Cruz	Jones	Sasse
Daines	Kaine	Schatz
Donnelly	Kennedy	Schumer
Durbin	King	Scott
Enzi	Klobuchar	Shahen
Ernst	Lankford	Shelby
Feinstein	Leahy	Sullivan
Fischer	Lee	Tester
Flake	Manchin	Thune
Gardner	McCaskill	Tillis
Graham	McConnell	Toomey
Grassley	Moran	Udall
Hassan	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Hatch	Murphy	Warner
Heinrich	Nelson	Wicker
Heitkamp	Paul	Young
Heller	Perdue	

NAYS—21

Baldwin	Harris	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Brown	Markey	Smith
Cantwell	Menendez	Stabenow
Casey	Merkley	Warren
Cortez Masto	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Duckworth	McCain
-----------	--------

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of John B. Nalbandian, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Nalbandian nomination?

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 95 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Alexander	Corker	Ernst
Barrasso	Cornyn	Fischer
Blunt	Cotton	Flake
Boozman	Crapo	Gardner
Burr	Cruz	Graham
Capito	Daines	Grassley
Cassidy	Donnelly	Hatch
Collins	Enzi	Heitkamp

Heller	McConnell	Sasse
Hoeven	Moran	Scott
Hyde-Smith	Murkowski	Shelby
Inhofe	Paul	Sullivan
Isakson	Perdue	Thune
Johnson	Portman	Tillis
Kennedy	Risch	Toomey
Lankford	Roberts	Wicker
Lee	Rounds	Young
Manchin	Rubio	

NAYS—45

Baldwin	Hassan	Peters
Bennet	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	Jones	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Coons	McCaskill	Udall
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Durbin	Merkley	Warner
Feinstein	Murphy	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Whitehouse
Harris	Nelson	Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Duckworth	McCain
-----------	--------

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:59 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Mitchell Zais, of South Carolina, to be Deputy Secretary of Education.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 10 hours of debate equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I have come to the floor this afternoon to oppose the nomination of GEN Mitchell Zais, who has been nominated to serve as Secretary DeVos's Deputy Secretary at the Department of Education. I am opposing this nomination because those who work at the top of the Department of Education should be committed to its top priority, which is helping educate our next generation of students. They should not be focused on demonizing teachers or public schools or the Federal Government's role in public education, and they should not be promoting their extreme ideological agendas at the expense of our students.

We need a Department of Education with a positive vision for our neighborhood public schools that believes that

everyone has the right to a high-quality public education no matter where they live or how they learn or how much money their parents make. That is what millions of parents and teachers and students stood up for during Secretary DeVos's confirmation hearing.

Despite the public rejection of her extreme ideology and her unprecedented tie-breaking confirmation vote by Vice President PENCE, it is clear Secretary DeVos has led the Department of Education in the opposite direction. She has continued to push her privatization agenda, trying to siphon taxpayer funds away from our public schools. She has ignored key parts of our Nation's K-12 laws, refusing to hold States accountable for the success of our most vulnerable students. She has made it easier for predatory, for-profit companies to take advantage of students, rolling back protections for students and dismantling the unit that investigates claims of fraud and abuse. Time and again, she has failed to protect students' civil rights. She tried to shrink the Office of Civil Rights. She rolled back protections for transgender students. She rescinded guidance for schools on how to investigate claims of campus sexual assault.

With Secretary DeVos's ideological agenda steering this ship, it is clear to me that the Department of Education needs a strong and independent Deputy Secretary of Education to once again start putting students first. Unfortunately, General Zais made it clear that he would be proud to be Secretary DeVos's right-hand man and shares her position on a number of concerning issues. He agrees with Secretary DeVos's extreme privatization agenda to siphon taxpayer funds from our public schools. He largely opposes the Federal role in education and, like Secretary DeVos, seems to lack even an understanding of key issues important to public schools.

As the State superintendent of education, General Zais allowed his partisan ideology to hurt South Carolina students. He refused Federal funding that could have saved teachers' jobs—the only State to do that—and he objected to plans to expand access to universal pre-K, calling 5-year-olds “too young to learn.” That is a particularly shocking comment to those of us who understand the importance of the first 5 years for children's development.

I come to the floor today on behalf of millions of parents and students and teachers who so loudly objected to Secretary DeVos's agenda during her confirmation, and I ask my colleagues to vote against this nomination and not allow another DeVos-like nominee into the Department of Education.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. KING. Mr. President, every morning, across America millions of people get up, get dressed, and go to work. They all have similar experiences. They are getting ready for a new day. They are getting ready for a new set of challenges. They are getting ready to serve their company and the place where they work to the best of their ability.

There is one group of Americans who get up every morning to go to work, and it is a slightly different experience because when those people report for work, they are knowingly and willingly putting their lives on the line. I am referring to our police officers and law enforcement personnel across the country.

I think it is an important distinction. All of us go to work. We all think about it. But stop and think for a moment that when someone puts on that blue uniform or green uniform, or whatever it is, to serve the public, they are taking a risk with their life. They are literally laying their lives on the line for the rest of us.

Fifty-six years ago today, President John F. Kennedy designated May 15 as a law enforcement memorial day, or Peace Officers Memorial Day, and the week in which May 15 falls is designed and set aside by our country ever since to recognize peace officers. I love that term—peace officers. They are here to protect us.

The Constitution in its preamble lays out the basic outlines of our government, and this is one of them: to “insure domestic Tranquility.” What a lovely phrase that is—to “insure domestic Tranquility.” That means, in many cases, law enforcement.

I rise today to recognize law enforcement officials across the country but, also, particularly in my State of Maine. As Governor, I spent 24 hours a day with the State Police. I learned in that job the quality of the people we have serving us, the quality of the people, who often could make more money and have more promotions in another line of work but who had chosen to serve the public and put their lives on the line.

In Washington, there is a memorial to our law enforcement personnel, to our peace officers. On that memorial there are engraved the names of those who have lost their lives in the service of their fellow citizens. Two of those names that will be added this year are from the State of Maine.

One was Chris Gardner. He was only 47 years old. He had worked with the University of Maine Police, and then he worked with the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency. He died November 15, 2016, from complications from a training exercise. He was involved in the Maine Law Enforcement Torch

Run. Many law enforcement people across the country are involved with the Torch Run, which raises money and visibility for the Special Olympics. He is survived by his parents, his brother, his sisters, his stepmother, and by many aunts and uncles. He is also survived by other loved ones. Chris Gardner served his public, served his people, and served his State and community, and he lost his life in that service.

Another loss last year that will be going onto the monument this year is Nathan Desjardins. Nathan was a member of the Fryeburg Police Department. He was only 20 years old. He had just begun his career in law enforcement as a peace officer. He died on his first day of water training, responding to an incident of a capsized canoe. The boat he was on hit an object in the river. He was thrown out. Desjardins and another emergency responder were thrown from the boat. He sustained a head injury and died on June 6, 2017.

Again, he is survived by his parents, his brother, his grandmother, and a large extended family. Both Nathan and Christopher will have their names added to the memorial this week.

They got up, they went to work, they served their public, and they served their citizens and their community. They put their lives on the line, and, in this case, they made the ultimate sacrifice.

A name that will not be added to the memorial this year—the additions are from the prior calendar year, but we had an unbelievably tragic event in Maine barely 3 weeks ago—is that of Eugene P. Cole. He was shot and killed in the line of duty on April 25, 2018. He was born in a little town called Skowhegan, ME. He was raised in that area and was the oldest of five. He graduated from high school and went into the Army. He came back to Maine, worked in a repair shop, and then, in the year 2000, he decided to pursue what was really his calling as a law enforcement officer.

In 2006, at the age of 50, he went to the Maine Criminal Justice Academy, and he became a rural patrol deputy for the Somerset County Sheriff's Office. I used to live right across the street from the Somerset County Sheriff's Office. I remember the sheriff when I was there almost 50 years ago—Francis Henderson. Francis Henderson epitomized law enforcement in Maine and then Somerset County, and his followers as sheriffs have done the same.

Gene Cole was in that mold. He was admired in his community. He was well-known in his community. He was respected. He embodied the values of law enforcement, and he was an inspiration to the officers who served with him.

He is survived by his wife Sheryl of 41 years, four children, several grandchildren, his siblings Tom and Sheryl, his mother, and a large extended family.

His funeral was in Bangor, ME, just a week and a half ago, and 3,600 people

were there. Law enforcement officers from across the Northeast and from across the country were there to pay their respects to one of their fallen comrades.

Eugene Cole was a hero. He wouldn't call himself that. He would be embarrassed to be called that. From my understanding, he was a modest and unassuming man, but he was a hero because every morning he got up to go to work. He put on his uniform, and he put his life on the line for the people of Somerset County, Skowhegan, and Norridgewock and for the people of the State of Maine.

I rise today to pay tribute to Gene Cole, to Chris Gardner, to Nathan Desjardins, and to all of the peace officers, the law enforcement officers—those across our country in our communities—who every day are willing to put their lives on the line for us. Peace Officers Memorial Day—and the week—is a fitting tribute to those brave people across the country who serve us every day and every night around the clock to “insure domestic Tranquility,” in the wonderful phrase of our Founders.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, across the country this week and as is evident in the Nation's Capital, people are honoring men and women who serve in law enforcement. If you are visiting the Capitol this week, you will see more law enforcement officers in many different uniforms than you would have expected to see, unless you are already here for law enforcement week.

When the Presiding Officer and I came to the Senate, Senator COONS from Delaware came at the same time. We started the bipartisan Senate Law Enforcement Caucus. It is a privilege for me to speak during law enforcement week as we honor those in law enforcement and to speak on behalf of Senator COONS and myself at a time when we think it is particularly important to recognize what law enforcement officers do.

I want to talk a little bit about the law enforcement officers who lost their lives this year in the line of duty. Too many law enforcement officers around the country have lost their lives or have been fatally injured in the line of duty.

Three law enforcement officers in Missouri were killed in the line of duty in the past year. The Clinton Police Department lost two of those officers—Officers Gary Lee Michael, Jr., and Christopher Ryan Morton.

Miller County Deputy Sheriff Casey Shoemate also lost his life. Deputy

Shoemate was killed last month while responding to a structure fire. He was in a fatal car accident. He served at the Miller County Sheriff's Office for 1 year. He is survived by his two children, his fiancée, and his parents and siblings.

In March, Clinton, MO, Police Officer Christopher Ryan Morton was shot and killed when he and two other officers responded to an unknown situation as the result of a 9-1-1 call. As Officer Morton and his colleagues arrived at the scene, the subject opened fire. The officers returned fire. They entered the home in an attempt to take the man into custody. The man continued firing and wounded all three of the officers. Officer Morton's colleagues survived their injuries, but Officer Morton's wounds turned out to be fatal. He served the Clinton Police Department for 3 years. Prior to joining law enforcement, he had served in the Missouri Army National Guard, and he deployed to Kosovo and Afghanistan. But it was at home in Clinton, MO, where he lost his life serving others. He is survived by his parents and his siblings.

In August of last year, another officer, Gary Michael, was shot and killed during a traffic stop. Officer Michael had stopped a vehicle for a suspected registration violation, and the driver exited the vehicle and immediately opened fire. Even though he was mortally wounded, Officer Michael was able to return fire and wound the subject, who was later apprehended. He had been with the Clinton Police Department for only 1 year. He was an Army veteran. He left behind his wife, his three children, and a grandchild.

In April, the Clinton Police Department placed a tribute to the two fallen officers in the station. The plaque quotes John 15:13: "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

Officers leave their homes every day likely to face more difficult situations than most of us face. The families of officers always have in the back of their minds thoughts about what is going to happen to the person they love when that person is out there defending us. When officers put on their uniforms, say goodbye to the people they love, and walk out the door, they put their lives on the line to try to keep others safe. We are forever indebted to them. We are indebted to their families. This debt becomes a responsibility for the sacrifices they make and the trauma some families face every day. When we see more police officers ambushed, when we see officers becoming targets more frequently than they used to be, this is the debt we owe to them and their families.

Every year in conjunction with National Police Week, the names of fallen officers like the three I just mentioned are added to the wall of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. There are more than 21,000 names on that wall, dating back to the first law enforcement death in 1791.

This week, Senator COONS and I will be introducing the National Law Enforcement Museum Commemorative Coin Act. That bill authorizes the Treasury Department to mint coins to commemorate the opening of the National Law Enforcement Museum located in Washington, DC. The museum is scheduled to open later this year and is dedicated to highlighting and honoring the work of law enforcement past and present. After the government is reimbursed for costs associated with producing the coin, proceeds will support the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund's educational and outreach programs. I certainly hope our colleagues will join Senator COONS and me—as 15 Members already have—as we circulate the request to have a coin minted and used in that way.

Men and women of State and local law enforcement put themselves in harm's way every day to protect our communities. The Federal Government shares the responsibility of ensuring that they have the training, equipment, and support they need to do their jobs.

We benefit every day from the people who are law enforcement officers in and around this building. One of the things they do is obviously keep the people safe who work here, but they also make the U.S. Capitol the most open and accessible Capitol in the world. People come here every day and walk through this building where history has been made and where the work of democracy still goes on. It wouldn't be possible for them to do that if it weren't for the police officers who serve and protect the Capitol and the places around the Capitol where people who want to see democracy in action come.

The stress and fatigue that law enforcement officers face in the line of duty can take a heavy toll and can lead to behavioral health issues, such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress. They have the stress that wherever they are can become the frontline when working in law enforcement. I was proud that the Senate passed by unanimous consent the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act during Police Week just 1 year ago. This bill, which I cosponsored, will help law enforcement agencies better understand and address the behavioral health needs of their officers.

On that topic, too often in the last decade, we have expected police officers to generally be the frontlines of behavioral health delivery. This is not a job that is best done by police officers and emergency rooms, but too much of it is still being done that way. Police departments all over the country have turned into crisis intervention teams, where they prepare officers—in some cases, every officer in a department is prepared to be a crisis intervention officer. They must not only be a law enforcement officer but also the

on-site person who must recognize a mental health problem and deal with that issue differently than they might if it were another kind of problem.

Recently, I cosponsored the Probation Officer Protection Act, which would allow Federal probation officers to protect themselves and enhance their ability to do their job by giving them the authority to arrest third parties who are interfering with their doing their job as they try to secure a person who has violated their probation. Currently, probation officers don't have the authority to arrest a third party who forcibly interferes with the officer's performance of his or her official duties.

We recently had Jim Goehring from the Eastern District of Missouri in our office for a couple of weeks to advise us on this and other issues, to be our policy adviser on Federal probation issues. I know he and the people he works with would like to see that bill passed this year.

There are a few things we can do and are doing to honor the men and women in law enforcement and to help them better meet the real challenges of their job. They are our first responders. They run toward danger when others are able to run away. All of us in this Chamber have an obligation to honor their service not just today, not just during Police Week, but every day and every week. This is a week set aside for that, as we see officers here in Washington and at home. It is a good week to say thank you. Whether it is here or where we live, reaching out and saying thank you to those who serve us is the right thing to do.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUNT). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, today, on Peace Officers Memorial Day, I would like to honor the service and sacrifice of Colt Eugene Allery, a sheriff's deputy in Rolette County, ND, who was killed in the line of duty in January of 2017.

Deputy Allery was only 29 years old, but he spent much of his young life serving in law enforcement. His loved ones said that he was happiest when he was doing for others, which is why he chose law enforcement as his career. In his life and service, Deputy Allery exemplified courage and a willingness to do whatever had to be done, regardless of the circumstances.

Deputy Allery's name was inscribed on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial earlier this week—a lasting tribute to his bravery and dedication to serving his community. His name joins 51 other North Dakota law enforcement officers who have paid the

ultimate price. We honor their legacy, along with police officers across the country who have died in the line of duty.

Here in the Senate, we are also paying tribute to our men and women in blue. I am proud to join my colleagues in sponsoring a Senate resolution that pays tribute to Deputy Allery and the 128 other law enforcement officers killed on duty in 2017. Their dedication to community and the rule of law is characteristic of so many of our policemen and policewomen, without whose efforts our communities would not be the same. In recognition of such efforts, our resolution also honors the service of all law enforcement officers by designating this week, May 13 through 19, as National Police Week.

We want to thank our men and women in blue—those who leave their homes and loved ones each day to protect our communities and heed the call to serve. While we pay special tribute to their service during National Police Week, we are always grateful for their sacrifices on our behalf. We honor them and thank them for heeding the call to serve.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I am honored to join with my colleagues in honoring the men and women of law enforcement during National Police Week.

This year, it was our colleague Mr. BLUNT, the Senator from Missouri and the leader of our Senate Law Enforcement Caucus, who arranged an opportunity for us to speak on the floor, and I thank him for that.

I wish to commend my colleagues Senators GRASSLEY and FEINSTEIN for putting together the National Police Week Resolution. As of yesterday afternoon, there were 75 cosponsors to this resolution, which is more than we have had previously.

In 2017, the law enforcement community lost 199 of its bravest to line-of-duty incidents. The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund reports that 53 officers have given their lives in 2018; 28 of those killed by firearms. This is a 56-percent increase over the same period in 2017.

I am very grateful that in Alaska we have not lost an officer in 2018. We are praying that continues and that we don't see any moving forward, but we know, like every other State out there, we are living on borrowed time.

Law enforcement families live on borrowed time. The job is inherently dangerous, and we pray and wish and hope that loved ones return home at

the end of his or her shift. Really, we know there are no guarantees, and there never will be.

The last Alaska officer to give his life to protect ours was Sergeant Allen Brandt. He was with the Fairbanks Police Department. His end of watch was October 28, 2016. Sergeant Brandt was shot multiple times just a couple of weeks before his death. Everyone thought he would survive his injuries. I had an opportunity to speak with him while he was in the hospital with his wife and his best friend. He was released from the hospital. Eight days after the shooting, Allen felt strong enough to actually appear before the Fairbanks City Council in person to thank the community for their outpouring of love and support and the unconditional love they had offered him and his family in the wake of this tragedy. He was very thankful to the community, most certainly, but he also went on to admonish the community. He said:

We need your support, not just when bad things happen. The officers do a hard job and most of the time it's thankless.

Those were truly his famous last words. He went to Anchorage for a second surgery a few days later, and he died on the operating table.

Officer Allen is clearly not forgotten in the Fairbanks community. He lived a hero's life, and his words before the Fairbanks City Council will be long remembered: "We need your support, not just when bad things happen." That has to be the reminder to all of us all of the time—to be there for those who are serving us, to be there to support them.

In an editorial published this morning, the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner offers the following:

With police receiving much negative media attention on the national level, sometimes people forget the vast majority of police officers are good men and women who put their lives on the line. . . . Take time to remember the . . . fallen officers who have given their lives up for their communities. And be sure to thank the police officers you do see for the hard job they do, even if nothing bad has happened lately.

Those were words taken from the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner this morning.

This week, thousands of members of the law enforcement family have come to Washington, DC, for public ceremonies on the Mall and here at the Capitol. There have been private moments visiting lost colleagues at the memorial site. The surviving relatives of the fallen are grieving and recovering at events sponsored by Concerns of Police Survivors. This is a great organization, a vital organization, whose existence is barely known outside of the law enforcement community. I have had several—several—opportunities over the years to work with this extraordinary organization as they have been there for the families who have lost their heroes.

There are ample opportunities this week to thank members of our law en-

forcement family for their sacrifices in public and, certainly, ample opportunities every day of the year to thank our officers in private, starting with our own U.S. Capitol Police who greet us at the door every morning. They remain on post when we leave at the end of very long days. They are here for us day in and day out.

I would just end with an observation. I think the editorial this morning in the Fairbanks paper offers up words of wisdom. As the memories of National Police Week 2018 fade, I hope we will not wait until next May to thank the men and women of law enforcement for their selfless and at times thankless service to our communities.

With that, I thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HEALTHCARE

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today in support of legislation I have introduced with several of my colleagues—Senators MURKOWSKI, BARRASSO, STABENOW, and CASSIDY—that would remove a barrier that prevents patients from getting the most affordable prescription drug prices at the pharmacy counter.

Mr. President, Americans have the right to know which payment method—whether it is using insurance or paying with cash out of pocket—would provide the most savings when they are purchasing prescription drugs. The two bills we have introduced would establish some clarity in this incredibly opaque drug pricing system.

Nearly 60 percent of Americans, including roughly 90 percent of seniors, take at least one prescription drug. In 2016, Americans spent more than \$330 billion, including a staggering \$45 billion out of pocket, on retail prescription drugs. The Federal Government picked up another \$139 billion through Medicare, Medicaid, and other programs.

Prescription drugs amount to nearly 18 percent of all healthcare expenditures and are the second fastest growing expenditure within healthcare. Moreover, two-thirds of personal bankruptcies in our country have been attributed to the cost of medical care, including prescription drugs. To make informed decisions, at the very least, we should have the right to know how much our prescription drugs cost.

At a series of hearings held by the Senate HELP Committee, I have questioned repeatedly one particularly egregious practice that conceals prices from patients at the pharmacy counter. This practice is the result of what are known as "pharmacy gag clauses." These are contract terms

that prohibit pharmacists from proactively telling consumers if their prescription would actually cost less if they paid for it themselves rather than using their insurance plan. In other words, if the consumer is using insurance, pharmacists can actually be prohibited from disclosing whether the consumer is paying the lowest possible price. In fact, the pharmacist is prohibited from sharing this vital information unless the consumer explicitly asks.

Most consumers would never guess that it would be cheaper for them to pay out of pocket than to use their insurance plan to purchase the medicine they need. Insurance is intended to save consumers money in this situation, but that is not always the case. Gag clauses in contracts that prohibit pharmacists from telling patients how to obtain best prices obscure what the true cost of the drug could be and the fact that it could be lower than what the patient is paying. Several recent investigations, including by the New York Times and NBC News, have highlighted this unacceptable practice. For example, a consumer paid a copay of \$43 for a cholesterol drug; however, had that same consumer paid cash rather than using his insurance, the cost would have been only \$19. Another investigation told the story of a consumer who used insurance to pay \$129 for a drug when the cost would have been just \$18 had he paid out of pocket.

From Maine to California, the stories are endless. And this practice is not an outlier issue. According to a survey by the National Community Pharmacists Association, more than 50 percent of community pharmacists reported that gag clause restrictions prevented them from telling patients about other less expensive options, such as paying in cash, at least 10 times in the past month.

Recently, I was at the pharmacy counter at a grocery store in Maine, and the couple in front of me decided not to take the prescription they needed because the copay of \$111 was more than they could afford. I could not help but wonder: If they hadn't used their insurance, would they have been able to purchase that drug at a lower price? It is so counterintuitive that very few consumers are going to think to ask the pharmacist that question.

I first learned about these gag clauses from pharmacists in Maine who were frustrated that they were prohibited from providing their patients with information on the most cost-effective way for them to purchase the medication they had been prescribed. Pharmacists are barred from speaking up, and those who do face penalties for doing so. Pharmacists are on the frontlines in helping patients manage multiple medications, and they would also like to help ensure that their patients are getting the best, most affordable price.

The first bill we have introduced, the Patient Right to Know Drug Prices

Act, which is S. 2554—which I have cosponsored with the four Senators I mentioned, Senators MCCASKILL, BARRASSO, STABENOW, and CASSIDY—would prohibit pharmacy gag clauses in healthcare plans that are sold on the exchange and in group plans as well. The second bill, the Know the Lowest Price Act, which is S. 2553—which I am a lead cosponsor on with Senator STABENOW—would ban these clauses in Medicare Part D and Medicare Advantage plans.

Specifically, both bills would prohibit health insurance plans and any pharmacy benefit managers with whom they contract from restricting the ability of a pharmacist to provide a plan enrollee with information about any price difference that may exist between the price of the drug under the insurance plan and the price of the drug purchased out of pocket. Our bills would also prohibit penalties from being imposed on any pharmacist who shares such vital and valuable information.

Some States have already taken action to combat this problem. For example, the State of Maine enacted a law last year that prohibits charging an insurance enrollee a copayment or other charge that is higher than the cost of the drug to the pharmacy provider. The Maine law also protects pharmacists who disclose information related to out-of-pocket costs from being penalized by insurance companies or PPMs under gag clauses. These are common-sense solutions.

In announcing his drug pricing plan last week, the President, I am pleased to say, stated his intent to ban any gag clauses that would apply to pharmacies. While the administration can take some steps administratively to curb this practice, the enactment of our two bills would ensure that this protection for pharmacists and for patients is required under law.

As consumers continue to face skyrocketing prescription drug prices, we ought to do all we can to ensure that Americans are getting the best prices possible. As Congress looks at innovative ways to bring down prices and to increase transparency throughout the healthcare system, our bills tackle an overlooked issue that directly affects consumers and pharmacies across our country.

Our legislation has already received strong endorsements from more than a dozen organizations, including Patients for Affordable Drugs, the American Pharmacists Association, the Pharmaceutical Care Management Association, and other groups, ranging from the Arthritis Foundation to the AIDS Institute.

I ask unanimous consent that these letters and statements be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

It is only logical that pharmacists want to be able to provide their customers with information that will help them afford the medications they have been prescribed. It is absolutely unac-

ceptable for pharmacists in this country to be banned, under gag clauses, from providing that invaluable information to patients, particularly those who may be struggling with the cost of prescription drugs.

I urge my colleagues to support banning pharmacy gag clauses and the passage of both S. 2554 and S. 2553.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

PATIENTS FOR
AFFORDABLE DRUGS NOW,
April 2, 2018.

Hon. Senator SUSAN COLLINS,
Washington, DC.
Hon. Senator CLAIRE MCCASKILL,
Washington, DC.
Hon. Senator DEBBIE STABENOW,
Washington, DC.
Hon. Senator JOHN BARRASSO,
Washington, DC.
Hon. Senator BILL CASSIDY,
Washington, DC.
Hon. Senator RON WYDEN,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS COLLINS, MCCASKILL, STABENOW, BARRASSO, CASSIDY, AND WYDEN: As an organization that represents patients hurt by high prescription drug prices, Patients For Affordable Drugs NOW is acutely aware of the importance of patient access to information on drug prices. Today we are writing to endorse The Patient Right to Know Drug Prices Act (S. 2554) and The Know the Lowest Price Act (S. 2553).

Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) often write contracts that prevent local pharmacists from communicating with patients openly about the prices of drugs. PBMs are a black box in the drug distribution pipeline, and these contracts extend their lack of transparency into our community pharmacies.

Patients For Affordable Drugs NOW has heard from patients all over the country who are cutting pills in half, skipping doses, and going without food to pay for their drugs. It's wrong. At the very least these patients deserve to understand where their costs come from and how to find the best price for the drugs they need. Your leadership on this issue is greatly appreciated, and these bills are a step toward giving patients the information they deserve.

Patients For Affordable Drugs NOW strongly supports S. 2554 and S. 2553 and urges Congress to move quickly in passing them.

Sincerely,
DAVID MITCHELL,
Founder,
Patients For Affordable Drugs NOW.

AMERICAN PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION,
March 22, 2018.

Hon. SUSAN COLLINS,
Washington, DC.
Hon. CLAIRE MCCASKILL,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS COLLINS AND MCCASKILL: On behalf of the American Pharmacists Association (APhA), and our 64,000 members, I am pleased to announce our support for the Patient Right to Know Drug Prices Act, S. 2554—legislation to permanently remove a significant barrier imposed on pharmacists from pharmaceutical benefit managers' (PBMs) use of "gag clauses" in contracts. APhA appreciates your efforts to increase patients' access to more affordable and cost-effective medicines by empowering pharmacists to inform patients that a medication may be less expensive if purchased at the "cash price," rather than through their insurance plan. For years pharmacists have

been frustrated by their inability to help their patients who they knew were struggling with high co-payments.

APhA, founded in 1852 as the American Pharmaceutical Association, represents pharmacists, pharmaceutical scientists, student pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and others interested in improving medication use and advancing patient care. APhA members provide care in all practice settings, including community pharmacies, physicians' offices, hospitals, long-term care facilities, community health centers, managed care organizations, hospice settings and the uniformed services.

America's 300,000 pharmacists are the health care professionals most often at the front lines of informing patients about their medication costs or copay amounts and explaining complicated insurance coverage policies. However, under many contracts with PBMs, pharmacists cannot inform patients that a medicine is less expensive if they pay the cash price and do not run it through their health plans.

Thank you for your efforts in removing this barrier on pharmacists—the medication expert on the patient's health care team—to assist patients in receiving the affordable medications they need. APhA is committed to working collaboratively with you and other stakeholders to improve the accessibility and affordability of effective medications. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Alicia Kerry J. Mica, Senior Lobbyist, Government Affairs.

Sincerely,

THOMAS E. MENIGHAN,
BSPHarm, MBA, ScD (Hon), FAPhA,
Executive Vice President and CEO.

[From PCMA, March 15, 2018]

PCMA RESPONDS TO "PATIENT RIGHT TO
KNOW DRUG PRICES ACT"

WASHINGTON, DC.—The Pharmaceutical Care Management Association (PCMA) released the following statement on legislation, the "Patient Right to Know Drug Prices Act," introduced today in the Senate: "We support the patient always paying the lowest cost at the pharmacy counter, whether its the cash price or the copay. This is standard industry practice in both Medicare and the commercial sector.

We would oppose contracting that prohibits drugstores from sharing with patients the cash price they charge for each drug. These rates are set entirely at the discretion of each pharmacy and can vary significantly from drugstore to drugstore.

Fortunately: to the degree this issue was ever rooted in more than anecdotal information, it has been addressed in the marketplace."

APRIL 16, 2018.

Hon. SUSAN COLLINS,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.
Hon. JOHN BARRASSO,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.
Hon. DEBBIE STABENOW,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.
Hon. CLAIRE MCCASKILL,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.
Hon. BILL CASSIDY,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS COLLINS, MCCASKILL, BARRASSO, CASSIDY, AND STABENOW: On behalf of the patient and provider organizations listed below, all of which are members of the Coalition for Accessible Treatments, we write in

support of the bipartisan Patient Right to Know Drug Prices Act (S. 2554), which would prohibit health plans offered through the exchanges or by private employers from using so-called gag clauses that can be used to prohibit the disclosure of pricing options to patients.

We are also supportive of legislation you introduced with Senator Wyden, the Know the Lowest Price Act (S. 2553). The bill would similarly afford protections for patients enrolled in Medicare Advantage plans and Medicare Prescription Drug Plans.

As you know, some pharmacists are required to sign "gag orders," which typically apply to generics and prevent the patient from making the cheaper choice of paying out-of-pocket rather than paying a higher co-payment. In fact, in some cases if a patient were to pay the cash price, they would pay less for their medication than if they used their health insurance. However, a pharmacist that has signed a gag order would be prohibited from informing a patient of this option.

Research published earlier this month in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that overpayments affected 23 percent of prescriptions filled out of the nearly 10 million claims that were evaluated. The study also calculated that these overpayments totaled \$135 million in 2013.

Thank you for your leadership. It is critical that patients are made aware of payment options at the pharmacy counter and understand whether utilizing insurance or paying out-of-pocket would provide the most savings to purchase needed medication. We look forward to working with you on these and other important access issues affecting patients with chronic diseases.

Sincerely,

The AIDS Institute, American Academy of Dermatology Association, American Academy of Neurology, American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association, American College of Rheumatology, Arthritis Foundation, Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc., National Psoriasis Foundation, Sjögren's Syndrome Foundation.

CVS HEALTH,

Woonsocket, RI, March 15, 2018.

CVS HEALTH APPLAUDS NEW LEGISLATION TO
BETTER INFORM PHARMACY CHOICES

BIPARTISAN "PATIENT RIGHT TO KNOW DRUG PRICES ACT" AND "KNOW THE LOWEST PRICE ACT OF 2018" INTRODUCED IN THE U.S. SENATE

WOONSOCKET, R.I., March 15, 2018—CVS Health (NYSE: CVS) today released the following statement regarding the "Patient Right to Know Drug Prices Act," introduced by U.S. Senators Collins, McCaskill, Barrasso, Stabenow and Cassidy and the "Know the Lowest Price Act of 2018," introduced by U.S. Senators Stabenow, Collins, Wyden, Cassidy, McCaskill and Barrasso. These bills prevent companies from instituting contract provisions, known as "gag clauses," which prohibit pharmacists from informing patients if the cash price of a prescription is lower than the cost the patient would pay using their health insurance.

"CVS Health applauds the introduction of the "Patient Right to Know Drug Prices Act," and the "Know the Lowest Price Act of 2018," which will help ensure all consumers can make informed decisions about their prescription drug costs at the pharmacy counter. CVS Health's own pharmacy benefit manager, CVS Caremark, does not engage in the practice of preventing pharmacists from informing patients of the cash price of a prescription drug, known as "gag clauses." Ac-

tually, our contracts with all dispensing pharmacies in our network require that CVS Caremark members always get the benefit of at least the lower of the pharmacy's cash price and the plan's copay. If a CVS Caremark plan member's copay for a drug is greater than the dispensing pharmacy's contracted rate, it is not our practice to collect that difference from the pharmacy. We are pleased to see these bills align the industry to these consumer best practices and applaud Senators Collins, Stabenow, Wyden, McCaskill, Barrasso, and Cassidy for their leadership."

[From CISION PR NEWswire, Mar. 16, 2018]

EXPRESS SCRIPTS ENDORSES "KNOW THE LOWEST PRICE ACT OF 2018" AND "PATIENT RIGHT TO KNOW DRUG PRICES ACT"

(By Express Scripts)

ST. LOUIS, March 16, 2018 (PRNewswire/—Express Scripts (NASDAQ: ESRX) today released this statement in support of S. 2553, the "Know the Lowest Price Act of 2018," introduced by U.S. Senators Stabenow, Collins, Wyden, Cassidy, McCaskill and Barrasso, and S. 2554, the "Patient Right to Know Drug Prices Act," introduced by U.S. Senators Collins, McCaskill, Barrasso, Stabenow and Cassidy.

Express Scripts is against clawbacks and gag clauses, anti-patient practices that have been used by other pharmacy benefit managers.

"Express Scripts has long supported the goals of S. 2553 and S. 2554, and we have worked with state lawmakers across the country to prohibit the anti-consumer practice of so-called "gag clauses." We applaud the Senators for leading on this important issue. Since we are already in compliance, we are prepared for an effective date of today.

"Drug makers want plan sponsors and patients to think that pharmacy benefit managers gain from this anti-consumer practice, which is clearly not the case. We encourage swift consideration of S. 2553 and S. 2554 so lawmakers can focus on the real issue—high drug prices set by manufacturers."

As part of its mission to put medicine within reach of patients, Express Scripts believes its members should pay the lowest cost possible, and be informed about the out of pocket cost of their medication in advance of filling a prescription. We provide members real-time pricing information, customized to their individual plans, via our website and mobile app. Moreover, pharmacies in our retail network are not permitted to charge a member more for their copay under their benefit than the pharmacy's cash price.

While there is never an instance where a pharmacist or pharmacy would need to tell an Express Scripts member about a lower cost by paying cash because the claim would process at the lower cost, we agree that so-called "gag clauses" are not in patients' best interest. Therefore, they are not part of our retail network agreements.

More information on this issue can be found at: <http://lab.express-scripts.com/lab/insights/drug-options/keeping-copays-affordable>.

Ms. COLLINS. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I commend my friend and colleague from Maine who has been such an extraordinary leader on these issues. She is the chairwoman of our Aging Committee. We recently had a hearing on how we can do better on pricing for insulin diabetes products. She is tireless,

and we are very grateful for her hard work.

PENSIONS

Mr. President, over the next hour, we will hear from a group of Senators speaking in support of the hundreds of thousands of workers and retirees across the country at risk of losing their pensions. We are here, once again, calling on Congress to enact pension legislation before it is too late.

I thank Senator BALDWIN for helping me organize this block of floor speeches, and I thank Senators HEITKAMP, MANCHIN, KLOBUCHAR, CASEY, and PETERS for their participation today and for their years of hard work in search of a solution. I also want to recognize my friend and colleague Senator BROWN for his tireless leadership on this issue.

If we don't act soon, in my home State of Indiana, nearly 22,000 Teamsters and 2,700 mine workers could face significant pension cuts—and they are not alone. There are nearly 150 multi-employer pension plans listed by the U.S. Department of Labor as in “critical or endangered status.” The failure of those plans would likely lead to the collapse of the Federal pension insurance program—the PBGC—the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

Over the last several years I, along with a number of my colleagues, have been calling on the Senate to take action. I helped introduce the Butch Lewis Act, which puts pension plans on solid footing through a new financing option. I also helped introduce the Miners Pension Protection Act, which would ensure the solvency of the United Mine Workers of America pension plan.

I met with Hoosier pension beneficiaries countless times to hear their stories, including hundreds of Teamsters at Local 135 in Indianapolis and dozens of mineworkers in Oakland City. Additionally, I have hosted bipartisan meetings and spoken with the current and previous administrations to push for action now.

Though I wish legislation had already been enacted, Congress did create a joint select committee earlier this year to hopefully craft a legislative solution by the end of the year. That is why I am here—to continue shining a light on this important issue and to push for a solution.

This issue has significant, real-life implications for the thousands of Hoosiers who are affected by it. Don't take my word for it; listen to the heartfelt words of my constituents.

Rex and Cristine in Fort Wayne, IN, wrote:

We both worked really hard for a combined number of 48 years . . . and now to be faced with the possibility of elimination or reduction of our pensions—through no fault of our own—would severely impact our peace of mind and quality of life. . . . A promise is a promise and we, as retirees, need these promises to be honored.

Randy, who is a retiree and Teamster since 1972 in Fort Wayne, IN, wrote:

My entire working career . . . I was promised what I would earn from my pension. . . . Now I am sixty-five years old and have health issues. . . . I need your help to pass the Butch Lewis Act of 2017 . . . that way we can all live the rest of our years with dignity and respect without becoming a burden on anyone.

Steven is a marine veteran from Columbia City, IN. He served from 1971 through 1974. He wrote:

Without my pension, Social Security is my only income. We are not asking for a hand out, only what most of us worked 30 years for. We earned our pension and as a member of Central States Pension fund, the government was already watching over our fund. What happened? Not many of us have anything else to live on. I am 66 years old and cannot replace a lost pension.

Elizabeth, from Fort Wayne, IN, wrote:

My husband and I are both drawing a pension from Central States. Together we worked 45 years without employer contribution to the pension fund. During this time we sacrificed a large amount in hourly wage so our company could contribute to our pension. Since retiring my husband suffered a heart attack and had two knee surgeries. It would be very difficult for him to find work that would replace the lost income if we no longer have our pensions.

Russel from Yoder, IN, wrote:

Without my pension, it will become much more difficult to buy groceries, pay for our medicine . . . my wife and I are both 81 years old. I paid into the pension fund for 41 years and I ask you to protect your constituents by urging the leadership to include the Butch Lewis Act in the agenda.

David, who is also from Fort Wayne, wrote:

We planned on having this pension for 30 years. All those years I worked hard, paid my dues . . . I thought I would be able to secure my family's ability to relax and enjoy retirement and not have to worry about pennies spent . . . this is not cheap and cuts into our Social Security. Our pension helps absorb these added costs for our household money and is not extra money.

Nelson, who is from Andrews, IN, wrote:

I started driving a truck in 1957 and since that time I've driven well over 3.2 million accident-free miles. . . . Now, my wife and I . . . rely on my pension for basic living expenses and to cover medical expenses. If my pension is cut, we'll be unable to make ends meet. We urgently need your help to protect my pension.

Rex and Cristine, Randy, Steven, Elizabeth, Russell, David and Nelson all earned their pensions, and they are just a small representation of the thousands of working families—and everyone has their own story—who are depending on us to do our job and act. They don't want a handout. That is not the American way. That is not the Hoosier way. They did their part. Now it is time for us to help make good on what they were promised.

They don't care about politics. They don't want anything to do with partisanship. They just want us to fix this. That is part of why we were sent here—to solve problems—and it is time to solve this problem now.

Let's reach a solution that allows American workers to retire with the fi-

nancial security they expected and the financial security they earned.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise on behalf of the more than 25,000 workers and retirees in Wisconsin who have paid into the Central States Pension Fund.

If Washington does not act, workers and retirees face massive cuts to the pensions they have earned over decades of work. If Washington does not act, small businesses will be on the hook for a pension liability they cannot afford.

I have been proud to work side by side with Wisconsin workers and retirees and with Senator BROWN, who introduced the Butch Lewis Act, and I have been proud to work with Senator DONNELLY and others to organize this afternoon's opportunity to share the stories of the hard-working people and retirees we represent.

The bill—the Butch Lewis Act—will put failing multiemployer pension plans, including Central States, back on solid ground, and it does so without cutting a single cent from the pension retirees have earned.

I have also introduced legislation to help shore up the government's insurance plan for these pensions. Earlier this year, I shared the stories of Wisconsin retirees who stand to lose more than 50 percent of their pensions if Washington does not act. Since then, nothing has been done. I am here once again to remind my colleagues that this is about a promise that must be kept.

This is about a promise made to Gary, from Marshfield, WI. Gary told me:

We recently got custody of our great grandson, and raising an 8 year old is expensive, more expensive than when our kids were young. If my pension gets cut, it would definitely affect our family.

I relate to Gary's comments because I was raised by my grandparents. I can't imagine raising a great-grandchild. So thank you for doing that. Also, yes, it does cost money, and you need to have the stability of keeping the promises that you were given when you enrolled in Central States Pension.

This is about a promise made to Diane and her husband, from Luxemburg, WI. Diane wrote to tell me:

If my husband loses his pension, we could lose our house. My husband has been through polio, cancer, a knee replacement—and he needs another. He worked hard all his life lifting thousands of pounds every day in a grocery warehouse. We paid into a pension expecting to have a comfortable life in retirement—and now it's at risk of being lost.

This is about a promise we made to Michael, from De Pere, WI, a Vietnam veteran. For over 30 years, Michael was a driver at a local construction business. His wife is a retired nurse. They both worked long hours and are now at the age where finding a new job is not an option. Michael told me:

With increasing costs of living and prescription drugs, losing my pension would leave us in a state of devastation.

This is about a promise made to Randall. Randall is from Suamico, WI. He is a retired truckdriver. Randall told me about long hours on the road and leaving his wife at home to care for their children. In 2015 he received a letter from Central States Pension Fund informing him that his pension would be cut in half.

I can't imagine receiving that sort of devastating news.

Randall is 68 years old, he is in poor health, and he would find it impossible to find another job today. He said:

My wife and I both worked hard our entire lives. Our hard work should have meant a secure retirement, and we are worried sick about the possibility of losing my pension. It is difficult to sleep at night.

If Washington does not act, we will be breaking a promise made to 1.5 million workers and retirees nationwide. Small businesses will make hard decisions to lay off workers or close their doors. Washington needs to act, and we need to do it now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague from Wisconsin for those heartfelt and inspiring remarks. It illustrates the problem—the problem I was talking about with my friend Randy, from Fort Wayne, who said: “My entire career I was promised what I would earn from my pension.”

These are people who every day got up in the dark, worked all day, and went home in the dark so they could take care of their families, so they could meet their obligations.

All of the businesses to which many of these teamster drivers delivered counted on those drivers to be there every day, on time in order to keep their business going, and they always kept their word.

The coal miners from my State were promised by Harry Truman that this pension was a sacred obligation that would be kept, and they counted on President Truman's word and the word of everybody else after that.

They kept the lights on in our country. They helped to make sure that we were able to win wars. They stood up every single day to fight for the red, white, and blue. All they ever asked is for us to keep our word. That is what we need to do.

I am honored to have with us here today my colleague from North Dakota, who fights every single day for the people of her State. We are so blessed to have her with us right now.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, this is such an important issue, and those of us who have spent time with any of the workers and those of us who have spent time with small business owners who are deeply concerned about the vi-

ability of their business under a “last man standing” kind of rule completely understand the level of grave concern these Americans are experiencing as a result of the problem with multiemployer pension funds like Central States. It is clear to me that if we fail to act, workers and retirees could, and probably will, see their retirement security disappear. Small businesses across the country could, and probably will, face bankruptcy, and taxpayers would still be left on the hook.

Today we are here to tell the stories and give the voice to the workers, small businesses, and retirees who are most at-risk for losing their pensions after years of hard work and playing by the rules. Today I rise to give a voice to thousands of North Dakota workers and retirees who are at risk of losing their retirement security because of the financial instability of our multiemployer pension system.

The only way to prevent these workers and retirees from losing their pensions is for Congress to act. These men and women did everything right, and they live not just in North Dakota but in almost every State. They played by the rules. They worked for years, if not decades, often in labor-intensive jobs, like coal miners or as workers in the trucking industry, such as UPS package delivery and grocery supply stores. They acted responsibly when they negotiated for and started putting money away in their pensions, taking wage reductions to guarantee that their family had a future.

I also want to point out that when I asked how many of the pensioners who come to my meetings served their country by putting on a uniform to stand up, usually it is about a third to a half of the room. So let's not forget that these are veterans who returned home. They started working in their communities. They took off that uniform and continued to build our communities, and now they are struggling to understand how a government and how a society could be leaving them in this level of uncertainty regarding their economic future.

I want to tell a couple stories of some of the people that I have met. I want you to know that on Saturday, I had a meeting with over 140 workers in Fargo. They came from all over, and their stories were heartbreaking. They couldn't understand, if they did everything right, how in the United States of America they would have their financial viability at risk. I had one man stand up who was 80 years old who told me that he went back to work when he knew there was going to be a problem, and he worked in the oil fields. He said: I am worn out; there is nothing more I can do.

I want to talk about Donna Matson and her husband Mike, who worked as a UPS driver for 30 years in Fargo, a job that had an impact on his time with his family and his health. In 2013 he was diagnosed with a progressive supranuclear palsy, a degenerative dis-

ease that requires regular and expensive speech, physical, and occupational therapies. That pension he put money into was supposed to be there to support his family after Mike's decades of labor. Now, when he needs it most and when his wife Donna needs it most, that pension could be ripped away.

Tina Kramer, from Mandan, was a member of the Teamsters, working as a secretary for the local union for 25 years, through which she earned a pension. Her husband was a member of the Steelworkers and worked for Bobcat for about 30 years as a forklift driver, and he earned a pension. Several years ago, both of them retired. Soon after, Tina's husband suddenly passed away. Tina lost her husband's pension and now relies solely on her pension. Tina has just a little bit of savings, and she has already had to dip into that each month to pay her bills for groceries and property taxes. Should the Central States Fund go bankrupt, it is only going to get worse.

Mark Rothschilder, from Bismarck, gave up a lot to work many long hours as a UPS driver for 27 years. When we say “gave up a lot,” he gave up going to his kids' plays and sports games because he often worked late. Because of the intensive labor of his work, he has had five back surgeries and another rotator cuff surgery, which forced him to retire early. If Congress doesn't act to fix the Central States Pension Fund, he doesn't know if he will be able to pay his healthcare bills.

Mark Lundebj, from Grand Forks, never thought he would be in the position where after 36½ years of driving a semi, putting in 14-hour days, with extensive stretches away from home, he no longer may have his retirement savings. That is the reality. He followed the rules and paid into his pensions throughout his entire career. He tells me that if we don't move legislation to protect his pension soon, he will have to sell his house.

I invite any of our colleagues in this body to call a meeting of the people who have been affected. I serve on the Select Committee on Pensions. At our first meeting, we had a lot of discussion about how difficult solving this problem will be. There was a lot of talk about the math and how we could make the math work and how we could bring this fund back into solvency. I said: That is right. We need to fix the economics of the pension fund, but we cannot ignore our moral imperative.

That moral imperative is to do the right thing, to make sure that, as we are standing there, we realize that, for very, very many—in fact, for hundreds of thousands of citizens of our State—this is life or death. This is the difference between having dignity in retirement and being completely dependent on someone else to help them through. This is at a time that they did nothing wrong, other than to plan for a pension that would work for them, other than to bargain for a pension that would work for them. We cannot

ignore the moral imperative. Yes, we need to fix this, and we need to fix it soon because time is wasting. The longer we wait, the more difficult it is going to be.

I invite all of our colleagues who aren't familiar with this issue to call a meeting or to come to one of our meetings and to look these veterans in the face, look these hardworking people in the face, look at the active folks who don't know if their benefits are already going to be given and available to them, look them in the face and say: It is simply a math problem. Your problem is a math problem.

No, their problem is an American problem. It is a congressional problem. It is an administration problem, and it needs to be fixed. We need to make a commitment to making sure that the people who have worked hard all their lives—the people we talk about every day on this floor—are kept whole and moving in securing their pensions. It is an American imperative.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I want to thank my friend and colleague from North Dakota, who works nonstop for the people of her State.

We often talk about making sure the things we do in the Senate reward hard work, that they stand up for hard work, that they are focused on making sure there is a fair deal for those, as I mentioned before, who go to work in the dark, who work all day and all evening, and who come home in the dark, and on making sure we keep our word in regard to pensions related to them—to the people who have worked 30, 40 years.

My colleague from Michigan, Senator PETERS, has always been at the forefront of making sure we keep our word, that we do what is right, and that we stand up for the working men and women of Michigan and our country.

I yield to the Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I thank Senator DONNELLY for bringing this issue to the floor. I also thank him for his leadership on this issue. He has fought for Indiana families day in and day out on the Senate floor. They are facing a crisis now as the people of Michigan are facing a crisis. As the Senator spoke about a fair deal, I can say, with a great deal of certainty, that the people of Michigan, just like the people of Indiana, believe a deal is a deal. This is a saying we have all heard, but it is also something on which we should all agree throughout the country.

The American commitment to honoring contracts is part of why our economy is the greatest in the world. Businesses know that if their partners in duly executed deals back out, they have access to the full power of our courts and our legal system to make them whole. This is basic fairness. A deal is a deal. Workers deserve the same fairness. Workers who have banded together to negotiate for pensions during their retirements in exchange for lower upfront pay deserve the pensions they have earned.

Generations of Americans have built their lives around the idea that if you work hard and play by the rules, you will have a fair shot at success. The certainty that hard work will be rewarded empowers Americans to achieve economic security, provide for loved ones, and retire with dignity, but for many Americans who have spent decades working hard, their retirements are now at risk.

Tens of thousands of Michiganders will be denied their hard-earned retirements if Congress does not act to protect the pension benefits they have earned. More than 400,000 Americans, including over 47,000 in Michigan, will face massive cuts to their pensions if the Central States Pension Fund is allowed to fail. Central States is not the only multiemployer pension plan that is on a rapid path to insolvency. As many as 200 financially troubled plans are at risk of being closed while the retirements of 1.5 million Americans hang in the balance.

When Michiganders contact me about this issue, they are frustrated and angry, but more than anything else, they are afraid. They are afraid they will lose their homes. They are afraid they will be unable to afford the healthcare they need. They are afraid they could, one day, become burdens on their adult children.

I appreciate that it is not very easy to share very personal fears, but I would like to share some of the stories I have heard from Michigan retirees and from folks who are hoping to retire soon.

Carl from Menominee would have to sell his house and find a new job he and his aching joints would, hopefully, be able to handle at the age of 72, after 30 years of hard physical labor.

Jan and his wife Thelma, from Deerfield, would lose the home Jan built over 50 years ago with his own two hands. Although Thelma still works and pays into a pension plan, she will not receive the benefits she has earned over the last decade—ever since the troubled plan froze the funds for active workers. For people like Thelma, the uncertainty of pension cuts is quickly becoming a harsh reality.

William from Erie is enduring an 80-percent cut to his pension. He describes it as the worst thing that could have possibly ever happened to him and his wife in their golden years. William is a Navy veteran who drove 120 miles to and from work every day to keep his pension and the promise of a comfortable retirement. The extreme cuts he is facing have forced him to go back to work. He had to overcome multiple barriers to senior employment in order to land a minimum-wage job. The job pays for basic necessities, like electricity, food, and heat, but he still cannot afford health insurance for his wife, who is still more than a year away from qualifying for Medicare.

These Americans made deals with their employers—decades of hard work in exchange for fair earnings and de-

cent retirements. A deal is a deal. We have the FDIC to make sure Americans don't lose their life savings if banks go under. We have federally backed crop insurance to help protect farmers who face unpredictable growing seasons. We even have federally backed mortgage insurance to protect banks if homeowners can't pay their mortgages.

Workers like Carl, Thelma, and William are not asking for handouts. They are asking for the pension benefits they earned, that they bargained for, and that they worked their entire lives to secure. A deal is a deal. We must make this right.

I urge my colleagues to stand up for American workers and support the Butch Lewis Act. We must address pension insolvency without sacrificing workers' hard-earned benefits.

I thank Senator DONNELLY for bringing this issue to the floor. I am with him, and we need to bring our colleagues with us as well.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Michigan, who has so many teamster members who travel back and forth across our respective borders every day, who ride some of the most difficult and dangerous roads in the world, who, on a constant basis, are helping families who may be in trouble on the road, who are helping others whom they see along the way. They are not only professional drivers and other Teamster members; they are people who keep a sharp eye out for others in order to help them if they are in trouble. They keep an eye on every family who is out there on the road and on their fellow drivers. They make America go.

So many auto parts from the Senator's State of Michigan come down to my State of Indiana. So many parts go from my State to his State of Michigan to create jobs, to make America go. We want to tell all of those workers: This is your capital. This is your government. We are the hired help. We work for you. It is our obligation to fix this because promises were made.

President Harry Truman promised our mine workers that their pensions would be protected and that their healthcare would be protected. Those mine workers went down underground and powered our economy and powered our war efforts in World War II, in Korea, in Vietnam. They were there to ensure that when our men and women were overseas, they would have what they needed. Promises were made. It is our obligation to keep them for the Central States Pension Fund and for other pension programs.

As I mentioned before, these are the people who go to work in the dark and come home in the dark, who drive our economy and who make our country the envy of the world. They don't come up with excuses. They make sure all of the other workers in our Nation have all of the goods they need to put cars together, to build planes—to drive our Nation forward, to continue to increase our productivity. That is what these

men and women have done for 30, 40 years, and they have contributed to their pension plans. All they are asking is for a fair deal. It is our job—it is up to us—to make sure we keep that sacred bond, and that is what we will fight to do.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, we are blessed to have with us my friend and colleague from West Virginia, Senator MANCHIN. No one fights harder for the working folks than Senator MANCHIN. No one fought harder to make sure we were able to protect the healthcare benefits of our retired mine workers. We worked together on that nonstop to make sure that promise was kept, and Senator MANCHIN has continued to work nonstop to protect the pensions of these mine workers and of so many others, like of the Central States. Senator MANCHIN has been kind enough to join us this afternoon, and we look forward to his remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, first of all, to my colleague from Indiana, there is nobody who has been a greater ally or greater friend than Senator DONNELLY in some of the fights we have had, basically making sure that there is fairness between business and workers and that workers are treated fairly. We fought for that. Mr. DONNELLY has fought for miners in Indiana, and he brought me into his State to spend time with them, and I appreciate that very much. We will continue to make sure that we get the job done.

This should not be a conversation we are having right now—fighting for miners' pensions. This was all rolled into one bill. The healthcare and pensions were all done at one time. We had a pay-for. We had it worked out. We thought we had an agreement, and it was bipartisan. It came out of the Senate Finance Committee in a bipartisan way. I thank Senator HATCH for taking an interest in leading that.

We will have to go back and fix this now. We have half of the job done and half more to do.

Two weeks ago marked the 1-year anniversary of having a permanent fix for the miners' healthcare, preventing 22,600 coal miners, just in my State alone, from losing their healthcare. Now the Joint Select Committee on the Solvency of Multiemployer Pension Plans, of which I am very proud to be a member, is determined to find a permanent solution for the miners' pensions.

Over 70 years ago, President Harry Truman recognized the importance of the coal that our miners produced for

this country, and he promised that the Government would guarantee that our great coal miners would have those benefits in return for their service. Let me tell you that up until that point in time, my grandparents, on both sides of my family, were coal miners. They both then started little grocery stores. Up until that time, there were no guarantees or benefits. When they said you owed your soul to the company store, that was literally and figuratively correct.

My grandfather lived up until 1927. He worked and loaded coal since he was 9 years old and never got a paycheck. He got scrip. At the end of the pay period, he always owed more than they paid him. So they were fighting for this for many years. It was Harry Truman who finally realized what the coal industry and coal mining had done for America. There has not been a group of people who have ever given more in blood, sweat, and tears in hard labor.

I tell people that they mined the coal that made the steel that built the guns and ships that defended our country and helped to build the Industrial Revolution and really helped to lift the middle class to what it is and what it has been.

It was over 70 years ago that President Truman recognized that importance, and he made sure that would not go unnoticed. He passed a bill with John L. Lewis and, at that time, Senator Krug. He passed a piece of legislation. This was not from taxpayers' money. They basically said that from every ton of coal mined from this day forward by the Mine Workers of America, a percentage of the price of that commodity, of that coal, would go toward their benefits so they would have something.

Let me tell you exactly what we have gotten today. The average miner's pension is \$595. We are not talking about thousands of dollars. Most of this goes to widows whose husbands have passed away. Without this, they don't have a lifeline. In 2022 it goes away.

The agreement was a sacred promise between workers and the country, and it captured the best of America and who we are.

But the multiemployer pension system in the United States is in crisis. As many as 114 multiemployer pension plans, including the United Mine Workers of America 1974 Pension Plan, are expected to become insolvent. The miners' pension fund is up first. We are the first ones on the block. This critical plan, which covers 87,000 retired miners—27,000 in my State alone—and 20,000 fully vested current workers is projected to be totally insolvent by 2022 or sooner. If Congress allows these pension funds to go under, the results will be devastating for retirees and for current employees and the communities these companies and beneficiaries are members of, including those in West Virginia. These financial losses will be felt throughout the communities UMW retires live in and spend money in.

We must work together to prevent this catastrophe and shore up miners' pension plans—pensions they have earned and paid into.

Let me state how most of them became insolvent. It didn't happen until the 1980s, as far as the bankruptcy laws in America. Bankruptcy laws in our great country put the financial institution before the human being who worked for the benefits they earned and paid for. There has to be a correction. There has to be some right done there because these miners and workers all over this country basically leave that money in and pay for their benefits, and, at the end of their work life, it is gone because of some conglomerate or some type of corporate takeover or through a bankruptcy. This can't be tolerated any longer.

We could not have passed a permanent fix for miners' healthcare without the support of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and President Trump. I have spoken to President Trump about this, and he is all for it. He is trying to help the miners. He knows what they have done for the country, and I appreciate his speaking up for coal miners and hard-working people across the country.

We have no better advocates for securing a healthcare fix than the retired miners themselves. They come up here day by day, putting a real face to the families and the challenges they have. They have done this for years. For years they have walked the halls of Congress. They met with all of the Members and their staffs. They worked the phones and wrote letters urging us to keep the promise that was made to them. I stand by them, leading the fight to make sure retired coal miners' pensions will not be taken away too. We are not going to let this happen. I have talked with thousands of West Virginians who will be devastated if they lost their pensions. We received letters from miners and their families about the fear and anxiety that comes with not knowing whether they will be able to pay the mortgage or put food on the table.

If my good friend the Senator from Indiana will indulge me a little longer, I want to read about Ricky, from Hewett, WV. He is worried that if his pension is taken away or reduced, he will not be able to support his family. He said:

As a retired coal miner my family and I rely greatly on these very modest benefits. Losing or even having my pension reduced would cause great hardship on my family. A coal miner's pension is not very much to start with. I am not asking for a handout—only what I earned through years of hard work.

Benny, from Oceana, WV, would have to choose between buying food and paying utility bills. He said:

I only draw a small pension of \$215.96 each month, but if I lose that I will have to decide between food or utility bills. I am an older disabled coal miner with a small social security check. The loss of my pension check would be devastating.

Judy, from Sharples, is worried that if she lost her late husband's pension, she and her grandson wouldn't be able to make it. These are basically people who have become second parents because the parents have become dysfunctional. She wrote:

I'm not a rich person, but if I lose my late husband's pension I will lose everything I have. My husband worked 30 plus years at the mines with the promise that we would be taken care of. Yes, I get Social Security but that won't cover my regular bills by itself, not to mention home and car insurance plus taxes. . . .

After securing healthcare benefits for retired miners, we proved that Congress can work together and put partisan politics aside. This was truly done in a bipartisan way. It is a philosophy that I followed throughout my life in public service and in the West Virginia State Legislature, as the Governor of the great State of West Virginia, and now as a U.S. Senator representing the great State of West Virginia.

The coal miners are among the hardest working people in America, and they spent their lives empowering the Nation and keeping it the strongest in the world.

I will leave you with this. When people ask: Where are you from? Let me tell you where I am from. I am from a little State that has the most patriotic people in the Nation. They have fought in every war and conflict and shed more blood and lost more lives for the cause of freedom than most any State. They have done the heavy lifting, mining the coal, making steel, and building the guns and ships that defend us every day.

The Good Lord has been so kind to us. He gave us a great venue, my State of West Virginia. We hope you come, and when you do, we hope you stay.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, we are so fortunate to have such a fighter for the people of West Virginia in Senator MANCHIN. We are grateful for his hard work.

We have another amazing fighter for the people of the State of Minnesota, Senator KLOBUCHAR. Senator KLOBUCHAR has fought nonstop on this issue as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, thanks to my friends from West Virginia and Indiana. I thank Mr. DONNELLY for his leadership and bringing us together today.

Minnesota, like Indiana, has so many people who are in the Central States Pension Fund. Like Senator DONNELLY, I believe that promises made should be promises kept. Over 10 million Americans participate in a multiemployer pension plan and rely on those benefits for a safe and secure retirement.

The Central States Pension Fund was established in 1955 to help truckers

save for retirement. As Senator DONNELLY knows, coming from Indiana—a State where there are a lot of truckers—there are a lot of truckers still in this pension plan. Today the Central States Pension Fund includes workers from the carhaul, tankhaul, pipeline, warehouse, construction, clerical, food processing, dairy, and trucking industries.

I have heard from people all over my State. Fred, from Hibbing, worked 33 years as a bread man and serves as a caregiver for his wife who has serious back problems and was recently diagnosed with leukemia.

Daniel from St. Michael worked over 41 years as a mechanic. If he were to face a reduction in his pension, he would likely be forced to sell the house he has lived in since 1973.

Sue, from Elk River, wrote about her husband Jim, who retired in 1998 and passed away in 2013. Jim left Sue a spousal benefit pension that was supposed to take care of her for the rest of her life. Sue writes that Jim's passing was "devastating enough on its own," but now she fears being forced into the labor market as a woman in her seventies, just to make ends meet.

These are just a few of the examples. Unless Congress acts, hundreds of thousands of participants in the Central States Pension Fund face the real possibility that their hard-earned pensions could be reduced. Many of these are from the Midwest. That is why it is called the Central States Pension Fund.

We need to find a workable solution for underfunded multiemployer pension plans. I know Senator BROWN is leading a group that is working on that—the joint committee working together—to find a solution they can present to the American people.

We all know that delay only makes the solution more costly. The time is here. It has arrived. We can't put it off any more. We must move forward now to get this done. I thank Senator DONNELLY for his leadership.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I want to thank the Senator from Minnesota. She has been a nonstop advocate for folks across her State and across the country. Another nonstop advocate has been my friend and colleague from Pennsylvania, Senator CASEY, who works tirelessly not only on behalf of the Keystone State but on behalf of working families all across America.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Thank you, Mr. President. I rise, first of all, to thank Senator DONNELLY for his leadership and my colleagues.

I am speaking today on behalf of hundreds of thousands of people in Pennsylvania who currently rely or will rely upon a pension. The multiemployer pension program protects about 10 million workers and retirees in

about 1,400 pension plans across the country. In Pennsylvania, that number is 230 multiemployer pension plans, with a total of about 910,000 beneficiaries. Without action, the full pensions of over 33,000 Pennsylvanians are at risk, as is the solvency of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation. In 2017 the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation paid \$462 million to Pennsylvanians whose pension plans had failed. That is about \$5,800 on average.

Democrats in the Senate have been fighting to preserve these earned benefits for our retirees for years, including our Nation's coal miners. The fight for our coal miners we have just half-won. We were successful in making sure that their promised healthcare benefits are there for them, but we still have work to do with regard to pensions.

It is inexcusable that Americans who have earned these benefits have to worry, as some do, and they have been worrying for many years.

We know what the tax bill did, among many things, for very wealthy interests. The tax bill that got rammed through the Senate in December of last year gave \$13 billion in tax windfalls to our Nation's six largest banks. That is \$13 billion for 1 year—this year alone—and they are all unpaid for. So the debt goes up. Six big banks get \$13 billion, and yet this body, the Senate, can't deliver on the promise of pensions to hundreds of thousands across the country.

Let me give you three quick examples in the limited time we have. Debbie, from Western Pennsylvania, wrote about the miners pension act. She said in part, talking about her family: "We depend on my dad's pension to survive on the limited income." So said Debbie from Western Pennsylvania.

Dennis, also from Southwestern Pennsylvania, drove a truck for 25 years of his life, "working long hours away from my family," he said, "to provide a good living." He said: "I . . . would appreciate it if you could do whatever you can to preserve that pension for my wife and for me."

Stuart from Northeastern Pennsylvania—the corner of the State I live in—is a bakery and confectionary union pensioner. He said:

Please help save our BCTGM pension fund. I paid into that pension system for 26 years and depend on it greatly. I work three jobs and my wife works two jobs. We have put one child thru college and one just entered.

None of these families should have to worry about these earned benefits—this measure of retirement security, so we have a long way to go. But I am grateful that we are willing to work together on both sides of the aisle, and I am especially grateful that Democrats have been united in finally keeping that promise to those who have earned these benefits, those who have earned these pensions.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleagues from Pennsylvania and Minnesota, who are still in the Chamber with us right now. Their focus has always been on honoring hard work, on making sure that we keep our word to the truckdriver who has paid in every day, who is riding down the Pennsylvania Turnpike or the Schuylkill Expressway or heading up I-35 in Minnesota and that we keep the promise that was made to them after 30, 35 years of hard work, of driving, of trying to keep people safe, of making a difference, of delivering the food people have to eat, the parts people have to put together at work to make sure our country can continue to move forward. Those are the folks we are talking about.

If either of my colleagues would like to say anything else in regard to the amazing, hard work of the miners in Pennsylvania or the teamsters in Minnesota—those are the folks, the Central States Pension Fund and so many other pension funds, as well, that we fight for every single day to try to get this done because, as the Senator from Pennsylvania said, this is a job that is half done right now. We were able to make sure we protected the healthcare benefits that were promised.

There was a miner and his wife with whom I spent time in Oakland City, IN, down in Gibson County where we have so many coal mines. When I saw him, he said: This is one of the greatest days for me when we were able to keep healthcare benefits.

He said: "It's not for me. It's because my wife, who is ill"—and they are both in their eighties—"can now get her medicine again next week." That is what his concern was. It wasn't about himself. It was about his wife and making sure, with the pain she was struggling with and the healthcare problems that she had, that he was able to make sure she would be OK.

That is our job; it is to back up the word that was given to him because he spent his life working nonstop to keep our country moving forward, and all he asked in return is that we keep our word.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TAX REFORM

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the future for American workers is looking bright. A combination of tax reform, which we passed in December, plus other economy-boosting measures, such as lifting burdensome regulations, is starting to produce the kind of economy we need to give Americans access to a future of security and prosperity.

Our goal with tax reform was pretty simple: Make life better for American

workers. That involved a couple of things. For starters, it involved putting more money in Americans' pockets right away by cutting their taxes, and that is what we did. We cut tax rates across the board, nearly doubled the standard deduction, and doubled the child tax credit. Americans are already seeing this relief in their paychecks, but we knew that tax cuts, as helpful as they are, weren't enough.

We needed to make sure that Americans had access to good jobs, good wages, and good opportunities—the kinds of jobs and opportunities that would set them up for security and prosperity for the long term. Since jobs and opportunities are created by businesses, that meant reforming our Tax Code to improve the playing field for businesses so they could improve the playing field for their workers, and that is what we did. I am pleased to report that it is already working.

Less than 5 months into the new tax law, business after business has announced good news for workers—pay increases, bonuses, better benefits, like increased retirement benefits, like new and better education benefits, and enhanced parental leave benefits. So far we have more than 530 examples of businesses making things better for their workers and customers, from giant corporations like Apple to small businesses like the Don Ramon restaurant in West Palm Beach, FL.

Economic indicators are looking good. Last month, the unemployment rate hit its lowest level since 2000. That is right; the last time unemployment was this low, the iPod hadn't even been introduced yet.

Economic growth is on a solid track. The economy's growth rate in the first quarter of 2018 was nearly double what it was during the same period last year.

Small businesses are thriving. The president of the National Federation of Independent Business reports:

Small and independent business owners are notably confident about the economy. They are reporting that sales are strong, profits are good, and employee compensation is increasing. And many are setting into motion plans to expand.

That, again, is from the president of the National Federation of Independent Business. That is borne out by NFIB's recent survey data, which shows the net percentage of businesses raising worker compensation over the last 3 months has increased to 33 percent—the highest level since 2000. That is good news for American workers.

Americans had a tough time during the last administration. Our economy stagnated, and American families struggled. But our economy—and our country—are coming back, and they are coming back stronger than ever.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and other policies we have passed are creating an economy that will allow families to access the jobs, the wages, and the opportunities they need for security today and for prosperity tomorrow. The future is indeed looking brighter.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. President, I also want to take a moment to discuss the partisan net neutrality resolution that we will be taking up this week. There is support among Senators of both parties for passing net neutrality legislation, and Democrats know that. But instead of moving forward with bipartisan discussions on a net neutrality bill, certain Democrats decided they wanted to play politics. So instead of bipartisan legislation this week, we are taking up a partisan resolution that will do nothing to provide a permanent solution on the issue of net neutrality.

For most of its existence, the internet thrived under a light regulatory touch from Washington, DC. Washington avoided weighing down the internet with burdensome regulations, and the internet flourished as a result, becoming a vehicle for an endless stream of innovation and economic growth.

During the Obama administration, Democrats became convinced that we needed to heavily increase the Federal Government's role, so the Obama FCC reclassified the internet under a regulatory regime that was developed more than 80 years ago to govern monopoly telephone services. That decision posed a number of problems for the future of the internet. For starters, heavy-handed government regulations tend to stifle the kinds of growth and innovation that have always flourished around the internet.

There was also serious reason to be concerned that this new regulatory regime would discourage companies from investing in upgrades to their networks and infrastructure to expand access to broadband. That is a big concern for my State of South Dakota, where too many individuals still lack reliable internet access. In fact, the FCC has since found that the decision to regulate the internet under the 1934—that is right, 1934—telephone regulatory regime has slowed investment, which has restricted the improvement of internet services for rural Americans like those I represent in South Dakota.

In response to these problems, the FCC recently decided to restore the light-touch regulatory regime that the internet had thrived under and which had been in place for two decades prior to 2015 under administrations from both political parties. That, in turn, created the opportunity for us to adopt net neutrality legislation to permanently address concerns about blocking, throttling, and paid prioritization—and to deal with these concerns under a regulatory regime suitable for the 21st century internet. So that is why the FCC went back to the light-touch regulatory regime, rather than the heavyhanded 1934 law that would treat the internet like a Ma Bell-type public utility.

Instead of taking this opportunity to work with Republicans to develop bipartisan legislation, Democrats have decided to play politics. The internet,

like any industry, needs stability to grow and thrive. Internet innovators need to know what the rules of the game are now, and they need to know what the rules of the game are going to be in the future. We can't have a situation where internet regulations vary from administration to administration or, worse yet, from year to year. Imagine a basketball game where the rules changed every quarter or after every timeout. Well, it is pretty safe to say that players would quickly get fed up and start quitting the game, and that is exactly what will happen if we don't have stable rules for the internet.

Too many Americans are not going to be interested in taking risks or investing in innovation if they can't predict what the rules will look like a year down the road. So internet regulation is a serious issue that will affect our Nation for decades to come. This is too important of an issue for partisanship. Yet here we are with just more political theater with a partisan resolution that everybody acknowledges isn't going anywhere.

So, in the wake of the FCC's decision—which gives Congress the perfect opportunity to step in to provide clear guidance and clear rules of the road for the future regarding how the internet is going to be regulated—we have Democrats in the Senate who are in the midst of a political stunt, instead of sitting down and having a serious conversation about net neutrality legislation.

It is time to put together a bipartisan bill and establish long-term stability on internet regulation so the internet can continue to grow and thrive long into the future and not be subject to the whims of one administration or the next administration and rules and regulations that are going to go back and forth with the winds of whatever political party is in the White House or, worse yet, end up spending all the time in court and spending millions of dollars on litigation that could be spent investing in infrastructure that could deliver better services to people all across this country, including those in rural areas like South Dakota.

NOMINATION OF GINA HASPEL

Mr. President, we have been getting some great judicial nominees in the Senate, including several this week.

I am also looking forward to confirming another important nomination in the near future, and that is Gina Haspel's nomination to be the Director of the CIA.

Acting Director Haspel is one of the most qualified candidates for the CIA we have ever had. She spent 33 years in the Agency. She served overseas and here at home during the Cold War and Global War on Terrorism. She served in the trenches, and she has held important leadership positions in the Agency. She has won several awards for her work, including the Intelligence Medal of Merit, the George H.W. Bush Award, and the Donovan Award.

Her nomination has been endorsed by six former CIA Directors, including Leon Panetta and John Brennan, who served as CIA Directors under President Obama.

Our Nation and our world are facing a range of conventional and unconventional threats from the possibility of a nuclear-armed Iran to an increasingly aggressive Russia and China, to the ever-present threat of terrorism. We need a leader like Gina Haspel at the head of the CIA—someone who knows intelligence inside and out and who can provide the President with the information he needs to make decisions affecting our Nation's security.

I look forward to confirming Ms. Haspel as CIA Director in the very near future. I hope my colleagues in the Senate, on both sides of the aisle, will join in that endeavor and make sure this important position, at this critical time in our Nation's history, is filled with a very qualified nominee—the right person to serve as the head of that Agency.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

CHINA

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I want to begin by reading an excerpt of an article that ran on October 8, 2012. It was in the New York Times. The article opened with the following quote:

A House committee issued a blistering bipartisan report on Monday that accused two of China's largest telecommunications companies of being arms of the government that had stolen intellectual property from American companies and could potentially spy on Americans. The House Intelligence Committee said that after a yearlong investigation it had come to the conclusion that Chinese businesses, Huawei Technologies and ZTE Inc., were a national threat because of their attempts to extract sensitive information from American companies and because of their loyalties to the Chinese government.

The story continued by saying:

Allowing the Chinese companies to do business in the United States . . . would give the Chinese government the ability to easily intercept communications and could allow it to start online attacks on critical infrastructure, like dams and power grids.

This was from a bipartisan report in the year 2012, in the month of October, by the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Intelligence. Since then, over and over again, we have heard the intelligence community in this country clearly define this threat. In virtually every one of the open hearings that we had on the Intelligence Committee, I or one of my colleagues have had an opportunity to ask every member of the intelligence community—Director of National Intelligence, Director of the CIA, Director of the FBI, the Director of Counterintelligence, Mr. Evanina, or the nominee before us today—and every time one of us would ask: Would you use a ZTE phone? We are still waiting for one of them to say yes. Every single one of them said no, which is why I was pleased a couple of weeks ago when the Commerce Department brought sanctions against ZTE.

It was not a Congressional issue. Although it could be, it wasn't. It was because, on top of the spying and everything else, ZTE had helped Iran and North Korea evade international sanctions. So the penalty was, American companies could no longer sell component pieces to ZTE, which has led them to being on the brink of being out of business.

No one should feel sorry for ZTE. This is a company heavily subsidized by the Chinese Government that protects them at home, protects them in China, subsidizes them in China but exports them abroad with the hopes that they can help them steal secrets, monitor, and be an arm and tool of intelligence for them. No one should feel sorry for them.

So I was surprised to see, a couple days ago—as the President tweeted and then there have been articles about how perhaps maybe these sanctions might be going away in exchange for a deal on agriculture. I want to tell you, if that is what happens, the President has gotten terrible advice, and it would be a terrible thing for him to do. I think it would be deeply problematic for the national security of the United States and ultimately for his hopes of rebalancing America's relationship with China, geopolitically, economically, commercially, and certainly on security.

The most important thing to understand is, China is carrying out a plan. They put it out there. It is not a conspiracy. It is there for the world to see: Made in China 2025. Made in China 2025 is a plan to dominate the 10 most important technologies of the 21st century. You may ask: Why is that a big deal? Countries would want to do that. They have every right to aspire to that, and I agree. If they want to dominate these 10 fields, they have every right to invest in research and innovation. They have every right to do all of that.

The problem is, that is not how they intend to dominate these fields. The way they intend to dominate the 10 top technologies of the 21st century is to steal the intellectual property, basically the protected, secret ideas our companies are innovating, that American researchers are innovating—to steal that and use it for themselves.

Furthermore, they insist that all of their companies be allowed to sell whatever they want to the United States without any restriction. On the other hand, our companies are restricted—some prohibited—from selling to China's 1.2 billion, 1.3 billion-person market, soon to be the largest economy in the world.

So, in essence, they intend to dominate these 10 fields by cheating their way into a position of dominance, and that alone is not just an economic issue. This is a national security issue. If you dominate the field of artificial intelligence, if you dominate the field of telecommunications, if you dominate the field of aerospace technology,

you will dominate the field of national defense and national security, and you will pose a threat to other countries that do not.

We are giving it to them. We are literally allowing them to steal it from us, and they play our system against us. American companies go to China to do business, and here is what they tell them: You can only do business here if you partner up with a Chinese company. You have to give them all the secrets to how you do business. By the way, time and again, as soon as the Chinese company can do what the American company can do, the American company gets kicked out. Suddenly, you have a competitor all over the world that you helped build by giving it to them for free.

Sadly, a lot of American companies play the game because all they care about is being able to sell to China in the short term and have profits, without any thought about the long term or national security of the United States.

I imagine many of these are the same voices that are trekking down to the White House to tell the President to do this deal on ZTE. The ZTE thing is not just a commercial and trade issue—although it is and it could be. It is much more than just that. It needs to be taken with the seriousness it deserves. It is not just about telecommunications.

If you have a ZTE phone—and they are widespread in the United States. These things are hitting up against our towers. They will not just use that to pull American phone companies out of business; they can use that to spy on American companies to steal the intellectual property of the United States. It is exactly what they have done. It is what the report said they do: spying on Americans and stealing intellectual property from American companies. This trade dispute with China is about a lot more than trade. It is about geopolitical balance. It is about fairness.

This is our last chance to get it right. It is almost too late. I am telling you, if we get this wrong—if we back down, when historians write about this period of time in our history, they are going to say the Americans literally gave it over to the Chinese; allowed them to steal from them because they were more interested in short-term gain and were willing to turn over the future.

We will live in a world where China dominates many of the top fields, including many that are critical to our national security and the defense of our interests and of our Nation.

I would argue to you that ZTE should not be allowed to sell anything in the United States. I would argue to you that if a technology company from another country is being used by that country not just to spy on government secrets but to steal the intellectual property of our businesses, they should be out of business in the United States. Some people would say: Well, China is very powerful. They are going to come

back and use other means to punish us for this. Let me tell you something. We have extraordinary leverage over their technology industry. For example, one of the things ZTE can do is they can buy from a company named Tsinghua Unigroup, which is a government-owned company. They can buy components from them, but then we can cut them off as well. In fact, every major telecom in China—Huawei, BBK, Yiomi, Lenovo—every single one of these depends on component parts from the United States.

Ultimately, what I would hope to arrive at is a balanced trade situation, a balanced commercial arrangement, and a balanced geopolitical situation between the United States and China, but right now it is way out of balance, and when you allow imbalances to exist and persist in international relations, it leads to conflict. It leads to wars. It leads to showdowns. That is what imbalances lead to. An imbalance leads to the country that becomes dominant to try to take advantage of the countries that are not, unless you agree to surrender to them.

This issue of China and ZTE is a terrible mistake. If the President cuts a deal with ZTE that says: Pay a couple of hundred million dollars in fines and you are back in business in exchange—and they violated the law. This is a law enforcement function on top of everything else. These sanctions against them are punishment for evading and breaking sanctions. If you basically wave that off in exchange for a deal on agriculture—these farmers didn't do anything wrong. These farmers are not being punished for evading sanctions. They are victims of retribution.

We have other angles. In fact, what we should be saying is: If you don't lift the tariff on our farmers, we will do the same thing we did to ZTE, to Huawei, BBK, Yiomi, Lenovo or any other company. That is what we should be saying, instead of being tricked into this apparent deal that someone is cooking up over there and giving the President terrible advice—which, by the way, I know that is not where his instincts are, but someone is getting to him. I don't know if it is from Treasury or where it is, but someone is basically telling him now is the time to cut a deal. It is the wrong time to cut a deal. This would be a terrible deal.

Let me close by telling you this. This is not just about technology. If you don't believe that China uses its leverage, the leverage of economics, to reach into your life here in America—people will ask: What does that have to do with me? What does it have to do with us? Yes, it is a bad thing. We are worried about China in the long term. What does that have to do with me here at home?

China has no problem using its long arm and its economic leverage to interfere in the lives of Americans. I will tell you how.

About 2 weeks ago, two American airlines, United and American Airlines,

got a letter in the mail from the Chinese Government telling them: We notice that your website says "Taiwan." It doesn't say "Taiwan-China." Unless you change your website, we are going to punish you. We may even take away your routes.

They haven't made a decision yet. We have reached out to both companies. Let me clue everyone in right now. If they are anything like the other American companies that have been threatened, they are going to cave. They are going to cave, especially United, which has all of these routes over there. This is an American company, headquartered in the United States, that is going to have to change their website because China has threatened them.

If you think that is not bad, I will tell you something crazy. Yesterday, the Gap clothing store came out with a T-shirt. It had a map of China, but it didn't have Taiwan on the T-shirt. China threatened them. Within hours, the Gap put out a tweet: We are so sorry. We apologize. We didn't mean to offend you. We respect your sovereignty.

This is over a T-shirt, for God's sake. This is the leverage they have.

Do you know there are Hollywood movies that are written in a way to avoid certain topics because, otherwise, they will not be allowed to play the movie in China? Do you know there are actors—such as Richard Gere—who are not allowed to be in certain movies or who can't get a Hollywood blockbuster movie because they can't distribute it in China? They will not let them. They can't have Richard Gere in movies in China because he is pro-Tibet. This is crazy stuff.

Here is perhaps the most egregious one. Marriott, a great American company, a hotel—everybody has stayed at one. Marriott had an employee, a guy who lives in America; he is not even an executive—just a good guy, a hard-working guy. He accidentally went online and accidentally—it wasn't even on purpose—liked a tweet about Tibet, and China went crazy. They threatened Marriott. Marriott didn't just apologize; they fired him. This is an American. He didn't live in China. He lives in the United States of America. He lost his job for accidentally liking a tweet that China didn't like.

This happens over and over again, and it isn't noticed. This is how they use economic leverage. This is how they get Panama to tell Taiwan: We no longer recognize you diplomatically; we now recognize China. This is how they got the Dominican Republic to do the same thing last week or a couple of weeks ago, and they are not going to stop. I hear Paraguay might be next. This has to stop.

We don't want to contain China. We welcome a prosperous China. We want a global partner. Imagine the United States and China working together against nuclear proliferation, against radical terrorism, and against all the

threats in the world. But this is not leading to a partnership. This is leading to a world in which China dominates every key industry, remakes every institution, and America becomes a junior partner the way Vladimir Putin and Russia already are to China, and that we cannot accept. But that is where we are headed because administrations—both Republican and Democrat—have taken this threat too lightly. They thought that when China got rich, they would start playing by the rules. Guess what. They not only have not played by the rules, but they assume all the benefits of the rules and live by none of the responsibilities.

This is our last chance. This administration has been given the historic opportunity—the last chance—to get the balance of this relationship right. One misstep could blow the whole thing apart and doom generations of Americans to living in a world—not one with a powerful China, one with a dominant China and a declining America.

That may sound like hyperbole, but if they win this battle on ZTE, the world will notice, and the message it will send is that when push comes to shove, this administration is no different from the others. When they come under pressure, you can get to the right people with the right friends in corporate America, and they will back down. Once that happens, every country in the world will govern themselves accordingly. They will not join us in confronting China's aggression and China's unfairness because in the back of their minds, they will be saying to themselves: When push comes to shove, America is going to back down the way they did for ZTE.

The issue itself is problematic. We can't be selling phones in America that they use to spy on us in our companies. But on a broader scale, it sends a message that demoralizes this effort and I think has dramatic consequences.

I encourage the President to think very seriously and very carefully. He is in a very strong position right now. I urge him to think very carefully about the next step and to listen to the people in his administration who are talking to him about the ZTE issue for what it is—a national security threat much bigger than just one company in the telecom industry.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

NATIONAL DRUG COURT MONTH

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today to highlight some of the great successes of our drug courts around the Nation. May is National Drug Court Month, and I have come to the floor today to highlight the work of these innovative courts—I think that is an understatement—which play a unique role in our justice system.

Participants in the drug court system receive treatment and support services to help these individuals recover, and the individuals are held accountable through regular drug testing and judicial supervision.

These courts are uniquely equipped for nonviolent substance abuse offenders, and they provide eligible individuals with intensive treatment, individualized consequences, and other medical services in order to help them overcome their substance use disorder—something we have heard a lot about in every State.

Participants are randomly tested for drug use and mandated to appear frequently in court so that the drug court judge can review their progress. The judge also holds drug court participants accountable for their obligations to the court and, of course, to society at large. All of these features make drug courts particularly important as we deal with the opioid crisis that has affected so many individuals, families, and communities in Pennsylvania and across the country. No neighborhood—no region of the State—is safe in this horror that we have been living through now for several years.

Given the scope and severity of the opioid epidemic, we need to invest in effective solutions. I use that word purposefully—“invest.” With their proven track record of success, drug courts should be a keystone of our efforts to deal with the opioid crisis.

Drug court systems not only save money, but they also reduce both drug use and crime itself. Recidivism rates among drug court participants are significantly lower than for those defendants undergoing traditional sentencing procedures. Around 50 to 70 percent of drug court participants complete at least a year of treatment, and 75 percent of graduates remain arrest-free for the next 2 years. Let me say that again: 75 percent of drug court graduates remain arrest-free for the next 2 years.

Additionally, studies have found that the use of drug courts save taxpayer money by lowering overall criminal justice costs. There are a lot of success stories from drug court graduates, and I want to highlight one today from Schuylkill County, PA, the Schuylkill County Drug Treatment Court.

This constituent of mine struggled with opioid and alcohol use disorder and spent time in prison before going through the drug court system. According to the probation officer, this Pennsylvanian is now “gainfully employed, has regained a positive relationship with family, is working towards maintaining sobriety and is now working towards the long-term goal of buying a home.”

That is just one story about one individual, who said:

I used to think about how much I wanted to use and what I wanted to use. Now I think about going to work and coming home to my fiancée and children.

That is one success story but a very powerful story.

As the probation officer said, that is just one of many “incredible stories of progress and redemption found in drug courts.”

As we observe National Drug Court Month, I encourage my colleagues to

continue supporting the innovative and effective work of these drug court programs. I want to thank the judges, officers, and other professionals who help make these success stories a reality every week.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. President, I also rise to talk about one other issue. It is an issue that we are hearing about today because of the ceremony at the Capitol. In addition to this being National Drug Court Month, it is also National Police Week, which we have observed as a nation since 1962.

National Police Week is an opportunity to pay respect to the men and women who have lost their lives in the line of duty, as well as their families. It is also an opportunity to express gratitude and appreciation for the work that police officers do to keep our communities safe every day. We owe a great debt of gratitude to those who have served and the families who have sacrificed alongside them.

Today I want to recognize those who have lost their lives in the line of duty in my home State of Pennsylvania, two officers who were killed in 2017. First is Brian David Shaw of the New Kensington Police Department. That is in Westmoreland County in the southwestern corner of our State. Second is Michael Paul Stewart III of the Pennsylvania State Police. These fallen heroes gave what President Lincoln once called “the last full measure of devotion” to their country.

We have a solemn obligation to pay tribute to these fallen law enforcement officers and to have their families’ backs. Paying tribute is not enough, though. We must honor those in law enforcement and the families of the fallen in word and in deed.

One of our top priorities should be fighting for policies and programs that make law enforcement officers safe. That includes working to secure funding for the COPS Hiring Program, Byrne Justice Assistance Grant—known as Byrne JAG—and the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Program, just to name a few. Some around here want to cut these programs or limit increases to their funding. Fortunately, in the latest spending agreement, there were increases for all three. I want to thank colleagues on both sides of the aisle for ensuring that these programs are well funded in the omnibus bill that we passed in March.

In addition to fighting for law enforcement dollars, we also have a basic obligation to ensure that our law enforcement officers are appropriately compensated and that their families receive the care and financial security they need and deserve—of course, especially for families who have lost a loved one in the line of duty.

That is why I am thankful that the omnibus legislation in March included a bill that I worked on with my colleague from Pennsylvania, Senator TOOMEY—the Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship Act, which will help children of fallen law enforcement officers

and first responders afford college by making them eligible for the maximum Pell grant available, now roughly a little more than \$6,000—almost \$6,100.

Every day, each of us has a part to play in working to make sure that law enforcement officers are safer and also to play a role in supporting the families of the fallen. I hope we can recommit ourselves to this goal during Police Week as we honor those who have lost their lives in the line of duty, recognize their sacrifices and their families' sacrifices, and express our gratitude to the men and women in uniform who keep us safe every day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, there is no more noble sacrifice than laying down your life in the service of others. Every year, more than a million law enforcement officers work to keep our country safe and to serve the needs of our communities. Our law enforcement officers put their lives on the line as they fight crime, and each year, law enforcement officers die in the line of duty. Many of these deaths occur while these officers are investigating crimes and enforcing our laws. Some are even the result of targeted violence against police officers. Other deaths involve tragic accidents, such as Sheriff's Deputy Julie Bridges and Sergeant Joseph Ossman—two police officers who were killed in a traffic accident while working to help their communities weather the onslaught of Hurricane Irma.

On Friday, I spoke at the Iowa Peace Officer Memorial Ceremony in Des Moines, where we honored six law enforcement officers from Iowa who lost their lives in the line of duty. It was my honor to pay tribute to these brave Iowa heroes, along with their families.

Losing members of our law enforcement leaves a hole in families and communities that no one else can fill, but we can honor them and remember them and work to support the efforts of other law enforcement officers who carry on their mission, officers who, despite the risks and the rigors of their work, work tirelessly to protect and serve their communities.

Yesterday, in memory of those who have fallen in the line of duty over the past year, I was proud to submit a resolution designating this week "National Police Week." This resolution is cosponsored by 76 of my Senate colleagues.

I am also working to clear the Project Safe Neighborhoods Grant Program Authorization Act through my Judiciary Committee so that the bill can be sent to the floor for consideration of the full Senate. This bill authorizes a nationwide partnership between Federal, State, and local law enforcement and prosecutors dedicated to the reduction of violent crime. This partnership will use evidence-based and data-driven approaches to policing. It emphasizes initiatives designed to build trust and collaboration with com-

munity leaders and organizations addressing violent crime. A companion bill is working its way through the House of Representatives, and I look forward to voting to support it.

In addition, I have been a longstanding supporter of the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program, which provides death and education benefits to survivors of fallen law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders. It also includes disability benefits to officers catastrophically injured in the line of duty. I introduced a bill to strengthen the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program, and that bill was signed into law last year. We worked hard on oversight efforts of this program to make sure that beneficiaries' claims don't linger forever but are timely paid.

Today, as I stand here on the Senate floor, my thoughts turn to my own home State of Iowa, where on March 1, 2017, Sheriff's Deputy Mark Burbridge went to work for his employer, Pottawattamie County. He and fellow deputy Pat Morgan were assigned to transport a man to prison who had just been sentenced to 45 years for voluntary manslaughter. On the way from the court to the prison, the prisoner assaulted Deputy Burbridge with a home-made knife, grabbed one of the deputy's guns, and shot both deputies. Deputy Morgan was seriously wounded in the attack. Deputy Burbridge was critically injured and died an hour later. The prisoner fled the scene, making it as far as Nebraska. Other brave law enforcement officials tracked him down and brought him to justice.

Deputy Burbridge was a family man who loved to work on cars and motorcycles. He also loved to fish and tell jokes. He is survived by his wife Jessica, daughter Karley, son Kaleb, and stepdaughter Kelsey Brant. We mourn his loss and remember his legacy of sacrifice and service this week.

Our law enforcement officers in Iowa deal with many of the same problems facing law enforcement officers throughout the United States. They work every day to stop violent crime, and they are on the frontline of the fight against illegal drugs and the opioid addiction crisis that every State faces. To help law enforcement officers in Iowa and in the rest of the country, we need to optimize our justice system so it puts resources where they are needed most.

Law enforcement should target the worst offenders, like violent criminals, major drug traffickers, and criminal masterminds. We should do more to help those who have done their time re-enter society in productive ways so they don't backslide back into a life of crime. A bill I introduced this Congress—the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act—does just that, and I appreciate Senator DURBIN standing with me on its introduction. It is a vastly bipartisan bill that improves fairness in sentencing, while permitting law enforcement to devote resources to tack-

ling their top priorities. It also increases incentives for criminals to cooperate with police and to put into place tougher criminal penalties for fentanyl distribution, for crimes of terrorism, and for crimes of domestic violence.

In addition, the Grassley-Durbin bill provides for recidivism-reduction programs to prepare inmates to leave prison and live a productive, law-abiding life. On that point, I give particular credit to Senator CORNYN and Senator WHITEHOUSE for their work on that part of the bill. Similar sentencing and prison reform initiatives at the State level have closed prisons, reduced crime, and increased public safety.

On a final note, I would like to take a moment to thank the Capitol police who serve right here in the Halls of Congress. The President, the Vice President, Cabinet Secretaries, and thousands of visitors from around the country visit the Senate every year. We Senators come and go several times a day with our staff. It is easy to take our feelings of safety and security for granted in this Capitol Complex, but we are able to carry out our duties because of the continued hard work of these Capitol Hill police officers. So thank you to the Capitol police for your dedication and your service. Our law enforcement officers deserve our respect, surely our support, and our admiration for putting their lives on the line.

We honor all law enforcement officers this week—especially those who died in the line of duty in the past year. We thank their families for their sacrifice, and we will remember the values of public service, of diligence, and the bravery they stood for.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 12 noon tomorrow the Senate resume legislative session and Senator SCHUMER or his designee be recognized to offer a motion to proceed to S.J. Res. 52; further, that following disposition of S.J. Res. 52, the Senate resume consideration of the Zais nomination; that any remaining time be yielded back and the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; and that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for the May 14, 2018, vote on Executive Calendar No. 780, confirmation of Michael Scudder, of Illinois, to be a judge for the Seventh Circuit. I would have voted yea.

(At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for vote No. 92 on May 14 on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 780, Michael Y. Scudder, of Illinois, to be United States circuit judge for the Seventh Circuit. On vote No. 92, had I been present, I would have voted yea on confirmation.

I was also necessarily absent for vote No. 93 on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 781, Amy J. St. Eve, of Illinois, to be United States circuit judge for the Seventh Circuit. On vote No. 93, had I been present, I would have voted yea on confirmation.●

(At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

CONFIRMATION OF MICHAEL SCUDDER

• Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I supported the nomination of Michael Scudder, of Illinois, to be a United States circuit judge for the Seventh Circuit.

Mr. Scudder is a dedicated public servant with a distinguished legal career. Upon graduating from Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law, Mr. Scudder served as a clerk for a Supreme Court Justice, clerked on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and worked as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York. Later in his career, Mr. Scudder served as general counsel to the National Security Council, counsel to the Deputy Attorney General of the United States, and senior associate counsel to the President.

In the private sector, Mr. Scudder managed complex civil litigation and white-collar defense for more than a decade. He also serves as an adjunct professor at his alma mater and a lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School. Mr. Scudder's commitment to pro bono work was recognized by the

U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. Mr. Scudder also volunteers for the Federal Defender Program, which provides free legal representation to individuals accused of Federal crimes.

Mr. Scudder's experience, expertise, and devotion to his community and access to justice makes him well prepared to serve as a United States circuit judge for the Seventh Circuit.●

(At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

CONFIRMATION OF AMY ST. EVE

• Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I supported the nomination of the Honorable Amy St. Eve, of Illinois, to be a United States circuit judge for the Seventh Circuit.

Judge St. Eve hails from Belleville, IL. Since her 2002 confirmation by voice vote in the U.S. Senate, Judge St. Eve has made Illinois proud with her service as a Federal judge on the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

Judge St. Eve possesses extensive experience in the public and private sectors. Her diverse legal career includes serving as senior counsel of Abbott Laboratories in Illinois, working as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and serving as an associate independent counsel for the Office of Independent Counsel conducting the Whitewater investigation.

In addition to an accomplished professional career, Judge St. Eve is active in our community, serving on the board of directors of the Chicago branch of the Federal Bar Association and as a member of the American Bar Association, the Chicago Bar Association, the Illinois State Bar Association, and the Women's Bar Association in Chicago. Judge St. Eve is also an adjunct professor at Northwestern Law School where she teaches trial advocacy.

Judge St. Eve has established a reputation as being an efficient and fair jurist presiding over high-profile cases and is prepared to be an effective United States circuit judge for the Seventh Circuit.

REMEMBERING JOSEPH BOYLE

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, 75 years ago over Brech, France, an American B-17 bomber was downed by hostile fire. The copilot of that bomber was Second Lieutenant Joseph Boyle, a proud Granite Stater. Lieutenant Boyle was one of four survivors out of a crew of 10, and while two of the crew escaped capture, Lieutenant Boyle and another aviator were captured and interned in Stalag Luft III, a notorious prisoner of war camp operated by the German Luftwaffe. For his service during the Second World War, which included 16 bombing raids over enemy-occupied territory, Lieutenant Boyle was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart.

After he returned home, Mr. Boyle raised a family, opened a furniture business, and was active in his community. Mr. Boyle was a lifelong tennis player and golfer and cherished the time he spent with his eight grandchildren. Mr. Boyle passed away in 2009, after a life well-lived and full of love. He is missed by his family and all those whose lives he touched in New Hampshire and across the world.

In 2001, before his passing, the people and government of France enacted a monument to Mr. Boyle and the other members of his aircrew. Standing outside the town of Brech, this memorial displays the names of the Americans who were in that downed B-17. As this year marks the 75th anniversary of the day that Mr. Boyle and his crew were shot down, the people of Brech have invited Mr. Boyle's family to join them to remember the events of that day and the sacrifice that many Americans made so that the people of France could once again be free.

Ceremonies such as this one are so important, both to honor the service and sacrifice of the Greatest Generation and as a symbol of the enduring relationship between the United States and our oldest ally, France. It is critical that we remember all those who sacrificed in the fight against totalitarianism and helped keep our nations safe and free.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DR. SUSAN J. HUNTER

• Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Dr. Susan J. Hunter. Dr. Hunter, who currently serves as the president of the University of Maine, UMaine, at Orono, will retire from that position at the end of June. I want to recognize Dr. Hunter for her many years of work at the university not only as president, but also as a researcher, professor, vice chancellor of academic affairs, provost, and more.

Dr. Hunter became the university's 20th president in June of 2014 and was the first woman to lead the institution in its 150-year history. Dr. Hunter has led the university to many achievements, including advances in enrollment, fundraising, advocacy, and partnerships. During her tenure, UMaine has welcomed the largest incoming classes and largest number of out-of-State students in the university's history. The school has also seen a 22-percent increase in private giving to its annual fund. Dr. Hunter also continued the implementation of UMaine's innovative five-year strategic plan, which was developed during her tenure as Provost.

Dr. Hunter's influence is not limited to the halls on the Orono campus. On July 1, 2017, she also became president of the University of Maine at Machias. Dr. Hunter also served her community by serving on numerous boards of directors, including the Maine School of